

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1           1.       A system for providing prepaid access to a parking area, comprising:  
2                   a prepaid ticket having ticket indicia, wherein the prepaid parking  
3       ticket was purchased prior to reaching a prepaid parking entrance of the parking  
4       area;  
5                   a controllable entry indicator located proximate to the prepaid parking  
6       entrance of the parking area;  
7                   an identification means for identifying the ticket indicia on the  
8       prepaid ticket;  
9                   a database wherein at least some prepaid ticket indicia data is  
10      maintained regarding specific prepaid ticket indicia that has been included on  
11      provided prepaid tickets; and  
12                  a processor, wherein the processor determines whether the ticket  
13      indicia of a given ticket is included in the prepaid ticket indicia data, and controls the  
14      controllable entry indicator, such that if the ticket indicia of the given ticket is  
15      included in the prepaid ticket indicia data, the controllable entry indicator indicates  
16      that entry into the parking area via the prepaid parking entrance is allowed.  
1           2.       The prepaid access system of claim 1, wherein the processor amends  
2       the prepaid ticket indicia data to show that the ticket indicia of the prepaid parking  
3       ticket has been used.  
1           3.       The prepaid access system of claim 1, wherein the controllable entry  
2       indicator comprises a controllable gate.  
1           4.       The prepaid access system of claim 1, wherein the controllable entry  
2       indicator comprises at least one light for indicating that entry into the parking area  
3       via the prepaid parking entrance is allowed and at least one light for indicating that  
4       entry into the parking area via the prepaid parking entrance is denied.  
1           5.       The prepaid access system of claim 1, wherein the ticket indicia is a  
2       bar code element.  
1           6.       The prepaid access system of claim 1, wherein the identification  
2       means comprises a bar code reader.



1           16.     The prepaid access system of claim 14, wherein the valid ticket  
2     indicia is provided in an inductively readable memory integrated into a valid prepaid  
3     parking ticket.

1           17.     A method of providing prepaid access to a parking area, the method  
2     comprising the steps of:

3                     providing a controllable entry indicator at a location proximate to a  
4     prepaid parking entrance of the parking area;

5                     providing an identification means that identifies ticket indicia on a  
6     prepaid parking ticket, wherein the prepaid parking ticket was purchased prior to  
7     reaching the prepaid parking entrance of the parking area;

8                     accessing a prepaid ticket indicia database, wherein the prepaid ticket  
9     indicia database includes at least some prepaid ticket indicia data regarding specific  
10    prepaid ticket indicia that has been included on issued prepaid parking tickets;

11                    determining whether the ticket indicia of the prepaid parking ticket is  
12    included in the prepaid ticket indicia data; and

13                    controlling the controllable entry indicator such that, if the ticket  
14    indicia of the prepaid parking ticket is not included in the prepaid ticket indicia data,  
15    the entry indicator indicates that entry into the parking area via the prepaid parking  
16    entrance is denied, and if the ticket indicia of the prepaid parking ticket is included  
17    in the prepaid ticket indicia data, the entry indicator indicates that entry into the  
18    parking area via the prepaid parking entrance is allowed.

1           18.     The method of claim 17, further including the step of amending the  
2     prepaid ticket indicia data to show that the ticket indicia of the prepaid parking ticket  
3     has been used.

1           19.     The method of claim 17, wherein the controllable entry indicator  
2     comprises a controllable gate.

1           20.     The method of claim 17, wherein the controllable entry indicator  
2     comprises at least one light for indicating that entry into the parking area via the  
3     prepaid parking entrance is allowed and at least one light for indicating that entry  
4     into the parking area via the prepaid parking entrance is denied.

1           21.     The method of claim 17, wherein the identification means comprises  
2     a bar code reader.

1           22.     The method of claim 17, wherein the ticket indicia is a bar code  
2 element.

1           23.     The method of claim 17, wherein the identification means comprises  
2 a means for reading inductively the ticket indicia stored in the prepaid parking ticket.

1           24.     The method of claim 17, wherein the ticket indicia is included in an  
2 inductively readable memory integrated into the prepaid parking ticket.

1           25.     The method of claim 17, wherein at least a portion of the prepaid  
2 parking ticket is adapted to be attached to an exteriorly visible surface of a user's  
3 vehicle.

1           26.     The method of claim 17, wherein the ticket indicia on the prepaid  
2 parking ticket is identified while the user's vehicle is in movement past the  
3 identification means.

1           27.     The method of claim 17, wherein at least a portion of the prepaid  
2 parking ticket comprises a sticker attachable to a surface of a vehicle.

1           28.     The method of claim 17, wherein the identification means is located  
2 proximate to the controllable entry indicator.

1           29.     The method of claim 17, wherein the identification means is a  
2 portable identification means.

1           30.     A method of providing a prepaid parking ticket that permits prepaid  
2 access to a parking area, the method comprising the steps of:

3                     providing a customer with an opportunity to purchase prepaid parking  
4 for at least one particular event;

5                     providing, if the user purchases prepaid parking for the particular  
6 event, a prepaid parking ticket having a ticket indicia; and

7                     including at least some data relating to the prepaid ticket indicia in a  
8 database, wherein at least some prepaid ticket indicia data is maintained regarding  
9 specific prepaid ticket indicia that has been included on provided prepaid tickets.

1           31.     The method of claim 30, wherein the step of providing, if the user  
2 purchases prepaid parking for the particular event, a prepaid parking ticket having a  
3 ticket indicia includes the step of reactivating the ticket indicia of a previously  
4 provided prepaid parking ticket.

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1           32.     The method of claim 30, wherein the user is provided with the  
2 opportunity to purchase prepaid parking for the at least one particular event at a time  
3 when the user purchases a ticket to the at least one particular event.

1           33.     The method of claim 30, wherein the ticket indicia is a bar code  
2 element.

1           34.     The method of claim 30, wherein the ticket indicia is included in an  
2 inductively readable memory integrated into the prepaid parking ticket.

1           35.     The method of claim 30, wherein at least a portion of the prepaid  
2 parking ticket is adapted to be attached to an exteriorly visible surface of a user's  
3 vehicle.

1           36.     The method of claim 30, wherein at least a portion of the prepaid  
2 parking ticket comprises a sticker attachable to a surface of a vehicle.

1           37.     An improved ticket, comprising:  
2                   an admittance portion for gaining entry to a particular event; and  
3                   a prepaid parking portion for gaining entry to a specific parking area  
4 for the particular event, wherein the prepaid parking portion includes a prepaid  
5 parking ticket indicia, that is identifiable by an identification means as a valid  
6 prepaid parking ticket indicia, such that, when the identification means identifies the  
7 prepaid parking ticket indicia as a valid prepaid parking ticket indicia, access is  
8 permitted to the specific parking area for the particular event.

1           38.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein the prepaid ticket is a  
2 multi-part ticket wherein the admittance portion is separably attached to the prepaid  
3 parking portion.

1           39.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein the ticket indicia is a bar  
2 code element.

1           40.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein the ticket indicia can be  
2 reactivated.

1           41.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein the ticket indicia is  
2 included in an inductively readable memory integrated into the prepaid parking  
3 ticket.

1           42.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein at least a portion of the  
2 prepaid parking ticket is adapted to be attached to an exteriorly visible surface of a  
3 user's vehicle.

1           43.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein at least a portion of the  
2     prepaid parking ticket comprises a decal attachable to a surface of a vehicle.

1           44.     The improved ticket of claim 37, wherein the ticket indicia on the  
2     prepaid parking ticket can be identified while the user's vehicle is in movement past  
3     the identification means.